

October 23, 2002

**Public Notice for 401 Certification
Griffith Bridge Repair
Sonoma County**

On August 30, 2002 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Kathie Lowry, on behalf of Steve and Barbara Barney, requesting approval for disturbances to waters of the state (stream) and other water quality impacts associated with the development of the proposed project. Due to the nature and circumstances of the situation, the applicant was given emergency authorization to proceed with the project as described. Therefore, the Regional Water Board is now processing an after-the-fact permit for this project.

A bridge leading to five residences was in serious danger of failing if repairs were not made before heavy winter flows commenced (according to the project engineer). The project was deemed an emergency because if the bridge failed:

- Vehicle access to the five residences would not exist
- The collapsed bridge would block storm flows and cause flooding
- Portions of the collapsed bridge would be picked up by storm flows and would damage property, vegetation, wildlife, and people downstream
- The bank in that area would be susceptible to significant erosion

The project applicant began construction in early September, so that construction would be complete before the onset of winter rains in late October. The project description called for repairs to begin with excavating a 15 foot by 15 foot area (at 3 feet of depth) under the bridge to remove existing sacrete, rocks, and part of the stream bottom. Concrete was proposed to be poured into this in order to create a reinforced floor and wingwalls. Two feet of river gravel and bed material was then to be placed over the concrete floor to restore the river bottom to more natural conditions. The project was to continue with the excavation of the creek banks 15 feet downstream and 30 feet upstream (the vegetation is mostly Himalayan Blackberry) and placing rock rip-rap laid at a 1.5:1 slope. Restoration proposed included planting willow in the rip-rap, as well as seeding and mulching all disturbed areas.

The applicant proposed to prevent water from entering the construction area by utilizing temporary coffer dams and pumping water around the site to a downstream location. The applicant also proposed to have a fisheries biologist on-site to supervise the removal and relocation of any trapped aquatic species.

Construction on this project began in early September and will likely be concluded by late October. A Streambed Alteration Agreement was obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared by CDFG on August 26, 2002.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of preparing the 401 Certification Permit. In addition, the Regional Water Board will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Lauren Hocker by email at hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov, or send comments to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.